

MnAPA Legislative Committee
4/10/09 Meeting Notes

Legislative Committee
Fifth Meeting for 2009 Legislative Season
2:00 – 4:00 pm
Golden Valley City Hall

Present: Co-chairs Bob Patton, Andrew Mack; Paul Mogush, Matt Brown, Michael Noonan, Blair Tremere, Brad Scheib, Suzanne Rhees, Andrew Gitzlaff, John Sevald, Mike Wozniak, Alex Conzemius, Legislative Committee Education Coordinator.
Andrew Mack, co-chair, called meeting to order at 2:05 pm

Update on Blog Concept: Brad and John Shepard will work on setting up a discussion group on a social networking site (e.g., Yahoo, Linked-In).

Planners' Day at the Capitol: Alex will be summarizing the evaluations and Bob will follow up on obtaining CM Credit.

Discussion of legislation (refer to Bill Tracking Summary Matrix):

- Green Acres bills have been consolidated and will be approved this year.
- Moratoria (HF0764) – This appears to be dead for this year.
- Transportation Policy Omnibus (HF928/1455) – bridges in cities need to include bicycle/pedestrian facilities
- Transportation goals (HF0899/SF0807) – redefines purpose of MnDOT
- TDRs (HF0305) – enabling legislation to allow private banks, nonprofits, to “bank” TDRs. Referred to Commerce and Labor.
- Mississippi Critical Areas Act modification (HF0424) – lack of funding
- Greenhouse gas bill – John Sevald – Sherburne County testified against it. See his comparison – greatest impact on growing counties like Sherburne – rumor from AMC that bill is dead for year – may be back next year. Difficulties of tracking and testifying are worth noting – typical question is “does your organization support it?” The bill confuses tax and zoning classifications – strange way for state to get into land use business.

Presentation on legislative reform:

Blair’s “white paper” deals with how best to communicate with legislators. A summary was passed out at the meeting and presented by Blair Tremere. Note that APA’s Smart Growth papers now available on-line.

- Note previous effort by township association to develop “Uniform Planning Enabling Law” – foundered because cities were threatened; hadn’t been involved. This was the last time the issue came up.

Mike’s presentation on Comprehensive Reform of Planning and Zoning Enabling Statutes. A power point presentation was made by Mike Wozniak.

Discussion: Can we agree on what type of reforms are necessary? Recap of Growing Smart research project. Many of Minnesota’s statutes date from original 1920s enabling act.

Why reform?

- Land now viewed as a resource, not merely a commodity.
- Citizens expect more participation
- Different goals are now common for land use controls

- Most local ordinances in MN date from 1950s-60s, and the 1970s Land Planning Act
- Recent reforms – WI, MD, WA. MN has fallen behind. Challenges for planners and developers. Lack of direction on what plans include.
- Lack of support for intergovernmental cooperation – witness problems w/ annexation
- Where do we start? Planners' opinions and issues differ depending on where they work.
- Identify specific examples of why reform is needed.

Andrew pointed out that there is lots of interest among membership already.

Approach: Start by identifying issues and problems. Use summer meeting – annual retreat & goal-setting – to devote to this topic.

Prepare a newsletter article (probably June issue) on it.

Other suggestions:

- Use Planners' Day at Capitol remaining funds to bring in someone from APA National to help facilitate. Andrew will make contact with them to inquire on potential involvement.
- John Baker pointed out that attorney Dan Mandelker is champion of Uniform Planning and Development Statute, and invited MnAPA chapter to be “observers” in process. Do we want to do that? (More likely to be adopted here if we play a role. General consensus that we'd like to be involved.)

Homework – come up with 5 examples of problems that legislative reform could or should address.

Next meeting: May 8, Cottage Grove

Meeting adjourned 4:15 pm